



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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2015 Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Specifications

Effective Date: April 20, 2015

NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service has approved the 2015 specifications for Atlantic mackerel, the 2015 through 2017 specifications for butterfish, *Illex* and longfin squid, as well as additional management measures in the mackerel, squid, and butterfish fisheries.

A full summary of information about mackerel, squid, and butterfish fishery regulations is available online at

<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/msb/index.html>.

2015 Commercial and Recreational Quotas

The table below shows the 2015 specifications for each species. The quotas for *Illex* and longfin squid are unchanged from 2014. The butterfish quota is increased by 19,330 mt from 2014. The mackerel quota is reduced by 12,949 mt from 2014. The butterfish mortality cap is the same as it was in 2014.

Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish 2015 Specifications (mt)				
Specifications	Mackerel	Butterfish	<i>Illex</i>	Longfin
Allowable Biological Catch (ABC)	40,165	33,278	24,000	23,400
Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	25,039	33,278	N/A	N/A
Commercial Annual Catch Target (ACT)	21,138	29,950	N/A	N/A
Recreational ACT/Recreational Harvest Limit	1,397	N/A	N/A	N/A
Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH/quota)	20,872	22,530	22,915	22,445
Tier 3 Mackerel Allocation (7% of DAH)	1,461	N/A	N/A	N/A
Butterfish Mortality Cap in longfin squid fishery				3,884

The longfin squid DAH is allocated into trimesters as follows:

Trimester	Percent	Metric Tons
I (Jan-Apr)	43	9,651
II (May-Aug)	17	3,816
III (Sep-Dec)	40	8,978
Total	100	22,445

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Region.

2015 River Herring and Shad Cap on the Mackerel Fishery

The cap is 89 mt, but increases to 155 mt if the fishery catches 10,000 mt of mackerel before the 89 mt-cap closes the fishery.

Once the mackerel fishery catches 95 percent of the river herring and shad cap (either 84.55 mt or 147.25 mt), the directed mackerel fishery will be closed and vessels will be limited to a 20,000-lb incidental catch trip limit for the remainder of the fishing year.

2016 and 2017 Squid and Butterfish Specifications

The *Illex* and longfin squid 2016 and 2017 specifications will remain the same as those specified for the 2015 fishing year. The butterfish mortality cap will also remain the same for the 2016 and 2017 fishing years. The table below shows the 2016 and 2017 specifications for butterfish.

Butterfish Specifications (mt)		
Specifications	2016	2017
Allowable Biological Catch (ABC)	31,412	30,922
Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	31,412	30,922
Commercial Annual Catch Target (ACT)	28,271	27,830
Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH/quota)	21,042	20,652

Changes to Butterfish Management Controls

The 3-phase butterfish management system enacted in 2013 has been removed. Vessels issued longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permits are allowed to land unlimited amounts of butterfish if using mesh greater than or equal to 3 inches until projected landings reach within 1,411 mt of the DAH (which is 21,119 mt for 2015). Once landings reach 21,119 mt in 2015, these vessels will be limited to a 5,000-lb trip limit. Vessels issued a longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit fishing with mesh less than 3 inches are prohibited from landing more than 2,500 lb of butterfish per trip, and there are no changes for those vessels. If the projected landings reach the annual DAH (22,530 mt for 2015), then the trip limit will be reduced to 600 lb for all vessels issued a longfin squid/butterfish moratorium or incidental catch permit.